

RECALL

- 1a. Adams tells his mother he will be careful driving on his long trip—that he will not fall asleep, drive fast, or pick up any strangers on the road. As Adams is crossing the Brooklyn Bridge in the rain, he sees a man who appears to be hitchhiking at the side of the road. When the man steps off the walk in front of him, Adams swerves hard to avoid hitting him.
- 2a. Adams picks up a young woman while driving. He tells her he sees a thin gray man with an overnight bag in his hand by the roadside and that he is trying to “run him down.” Adams crashes into a fence at the side of the road where he thinks he sees the man standing.
- 3a. Adams telephones his mother. He wants to call her because he thinks that talking to someone familiar, whom he loves, will help him pull himself together. He learns from Mrs. Whitney that he died six days ago in a car accident on the Brooklyn Bridge.

INTERPRET

- 1b. She is worried that he might have an accident on the road. Her fears prove to be justified. Adams thinks he avoided hitting the man on the bridge and kept on driving.
- 2b. The young woman Adams picks up runs away because she is frightened. She has reason to fear Adams because he is acting irrationally, claiming to see a man that she doesn’t see, and is driving unsafely.
- 3b. *Responses will vary.* Adams was killed in a crash on the bridge.

ANALYZE

- 4a. The figure beside the road is frightening because he repeatedly appears ahead of Adams, he is spattered with fresh rain even when there is no rain falling, he hails Adams in a strange voice, and he disappears as inexplicably as he appears.

SYNTHESIZE

- 4b. Adams wonders who the hitchhiker is and who he himself is. *Responses will vary.*

EVALUATE

- 5a. *Responses will vary.*

EXTEND

- 5b. *Responses will vary.* The idea for the play could have come from urban legends about a mysterious hitchhiker. Brunvand says that the legend goes back to the turn of the

Investigate, Inquire, and Imagine

Recall: GATHERING FACTS

- 1a. What does Adams tell his mother just before he leaves Brooklyn? What happens as Adams is crossing the Brooklyn Bridge in the rain?
- 2a. Whom does Adams pick up while driving? What does he tell this person? What crazy act does Adams perform?
- 3a. Whom does Adams telephone near the end of the play? What reason does he give for making this call? What does he learn from Mrs. Whitney?

Interpret: FINDING MEANING

- 1b. What is Adams’s mother worried about at the beginning of the play? Given the tone of the play, were her fears justified? What Adams think happened on the bridge?
- 2b. Why does the person whom Adams picks up run away? Does this person have a reason to fear Adams? Why, or why not?
- 3b. What do you think happened to Adams when he swerved on the Brooklyn Bridge?

Analyze: TAKING THINGS APART

- 4a. What makes the figure beside the road so frightening?

Synthesize: BRINGING THINGS TOGETHER

- 4b. What question does Adams raise at the end of the play? How would you answer the question?

Evaluate: MAKING JUDGMENTS

- 5a. Do you agree with the narrator that this is a spine-tingling tale? Why, or why not?

Extend: CONNECTING IDEAS

- 5b. Compare the play *The Hitchhiker* with other urban legends from *The Vanishing*. Do you think the idea for the play could come from urban legends about vanishing hitchhikers? Why, or why not? What similarities and differences are there between the legends and the radio play?

Understanding Literature

NARRATOR AND SOUND EFFECTS. Reread the definitions for **narrator** and **sound effects** on page 88. Is the narrator of this play? What information does the narrator provide about the play to capture the attention of the audience and keep them tuned in? What does the narrator say to capture the attention of the audience and keep them tuned in? What are the sound effects used in this play? Why are such effects especially important in a radio play?

FORESHADOWING AND SUSPENSE. Reread the definitions for **foreshadowing** and **suspense** on page 88. How does the conversation between Adams and his mother at the beginning of the play foreshadow later events? What aspects of the hitchhiker raise questions in the minds of Adams and the audience? What question does Adams repeat about the hitchhiker at the end of the play? What question does he have about himself at the end of the play? What do you think the audience’s questions might be? What other questions do you have that were never answered in the play?

ANSWERS TO INVESTIGATE, INQUIRE, AND IMAGINE (CONT.)

could have influenced the author of a radio play who was writing in the 1930s and 1940s. People probably find stories about vanishing travelers to be especially spooky because many people have had the experience of driving alone along a dark highway and can easily imagine strange things

vanishes. In the play, however, the hitchhiker reappears over and over again. Also, the hitchhiker is a man instead of a young woman, as in Brunvand’s examples. Perhaps the most striking difference is that in the play it is the hitchhiker who disappears.

Writer’s Job

Imagine you wanted to tell the story of the play, being sure to include all the details of a poem. Write the poem. Think of a ghost story you know and rewrite it in the form of a short story.

Integrate

Language, C

PARTS OF SPEECH. Revisit the parts of speech you learned in Unit 1. Identify the part of speech for each word in the sentence.

Brian Welles, a famous actor, starred in this radio play, Ronald Adams, who was killed on the Brooklyn Bridge. Radio plays were very popular in the 1930s and 1940s. Have you ever heard of a radio play? It was made into a movie, but

Collaborative & Speaking & Listening

PERFORM A RADIO PLAY. Work with a partner to perform all or part of *The Hitchhiker*. Assign roles for the narrator, actors, and sound effects. Rehearse the play with your partner. You may wish to record your presentation, listen to it, and then do a critique of the performance. If your class is large, divide into teams and have each team perform. If you wish, you may record the play slightly so that the lead character, Adams, for example,

ANSWERS TO INTEGRATING T

Collaborative Learning & Speaking & Listening. Students will need to convey the story of the characters strictly through their dialogue. They should think about how the characters change in different scenes.